


TILDE BARDI

A GUIDE TO THE GREAT ROMAN MONUMENTS

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The Pantheon
The Roman Forum
The Colosseum
The Arch of Constantine
The Bath of Caracalla

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The Arch of Constantine - The
Bath of Caracalla*



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St. PETER

This great and magnificent temple is situated in the Vatican City where the amphitheatre of Nero was once. Tacitus relates that in this amphitheatre the cruel Emperor had a great number of Christians slaughtered and burnt alive.

The merciful Christians buried the martyrs in the neighbourhood of the amphitheatre and here after a short time was placed the body of the Prince of the Apostles, St. Peter, who suffered martyrdom under Nero.

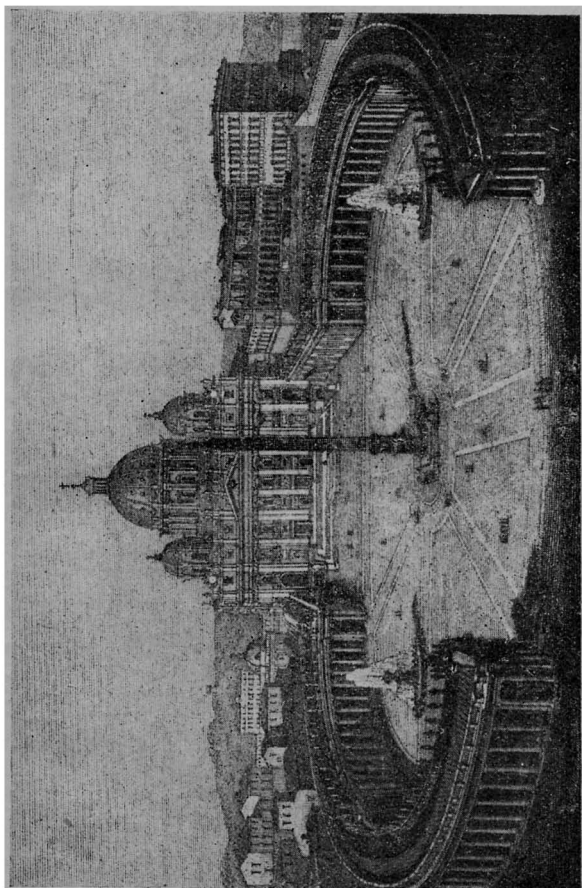
In the year 324 by will of Constantine the Great, on the sepulchre of the Apostle, where there was already a little Oratorio that St. Anacletus had built there, rose the first basilica of St. Peter; it was large and majestic and divided into five naves by a large number of columns and beautified with frescoes and mosaics and innumerable treasures of art.

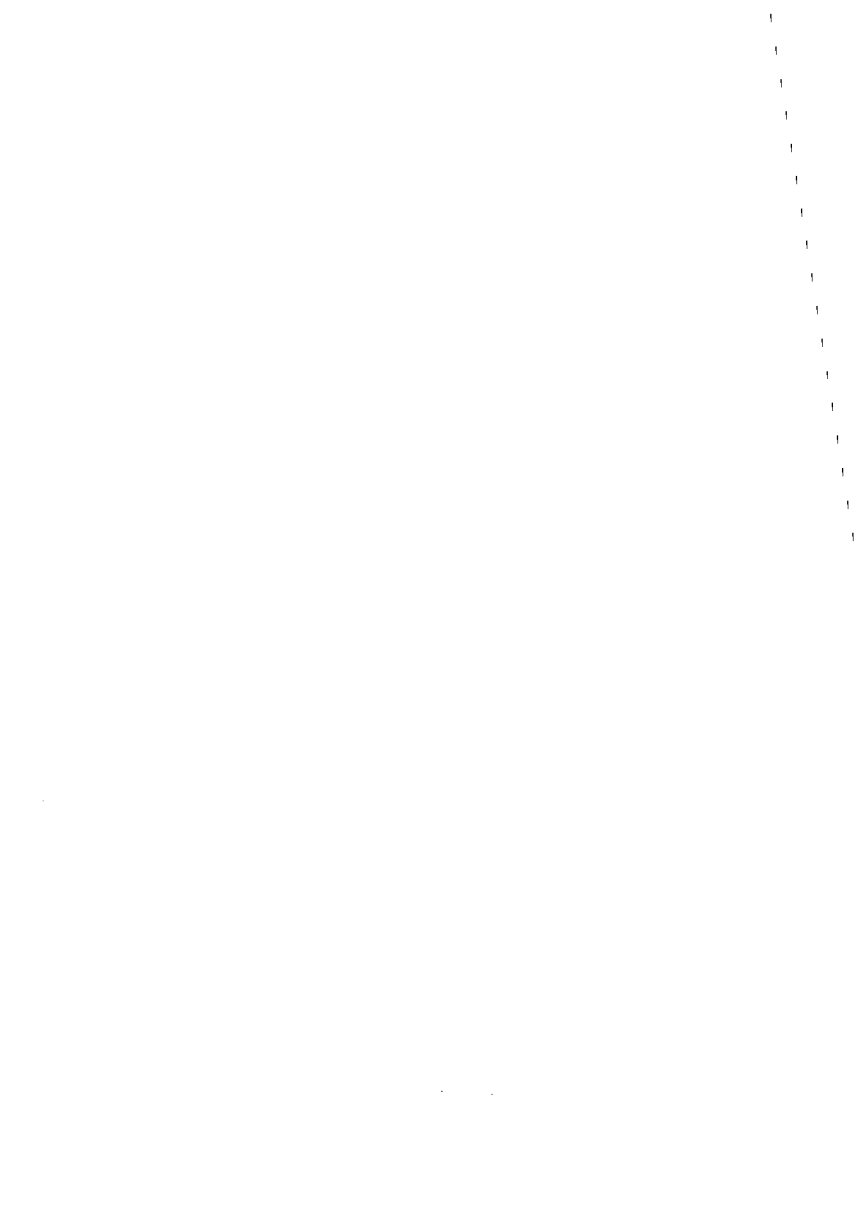
In this basilica whose splendid life lasted over a thousand years, were consecrated and crowned many emperors, first of all Charles Magne, who, on Christmas day, in the year 800 receiving the imperial crown from the hands of Leo III, was saluted with these words: «to Charles most merciful Augustus, crowned by God, great and pacific Emperor of the Romans, life and victory».

In 1450 Nicholas V seeing that the Basilica, though restored many times, was on the point of falling down because of its failing foundations resolved to build it again and entrusted Architect Bernard Rossellini with the task.

The latter began the reconstruction trying to respect the former Basilica leaving untouched the entrance portico adorned with magnificent mosaics.

In 1455 at Nicholas V's death the work was interrupted and was begun a new half a century later by Julius II who having a bent for great undertakings, chose the most colossal among the projects, Bramante's; it was the project of a temple in the shape of a Greek cross with a dome in the middle, like the dome of the Pantheon and held up by four huge pillars. To put into effect this grandiose project, Bramante began the work of demolition of the ancient Basilica without any consideration for the ancient memories and the treasures of art it contained. And for this work





he got the title of *Mastro Ruinante* from his contemporaries.

But at the beginning of the work both Julius II and Bramante died (1513-1514); so Leo X gave the direction of the work to Raphael Sanzio who, together with Julian of Sangallo and Brother James da Verona, changed the project of the Greek cross into the Latin one, departing altogether from Bramante's project whose intention was to make visible from any point of the Basilica the huge Mausoleum that Julius II had in mind to be built for himself and situated in the middle of the Basilica. Raphael died in 1520 and was succeeded by Balthasar Peruzzi who returned to the project of the Greek cross; he was succeeded by Sangallo who returned again to the project of the Latin cross and at last Michael Angelo returned once more to the project of the Greek cross.

The latter developed, enlarged and consolidated the project of Bramante, but he did a new design for the dome, which no longer resembled the Pantheon's but was similar to Brunelleschi's dome of *S. Maria del Fiore*, completed the Basilica triumphantly to tower high and magnificent in the sky of Rome. At Michael Angelo's death (1564) only the lower part of the dome and three transepts of the church had been finished.

The work was continued both by Vignola and Pirro Ligorio but it was James della Porta, aided by Dominic Fontana who, under Pope Sixtus V, an energetic and determined Pope, that completed the work only in 22 months. James della Porta did not keep strictly to the design left by Michael Angelo, he enlarged and made the dome more pointed and narrowed its highest part making the whole more slender.

As Paul V wanted the work to be completed and the Basilica enlarged he returned again to the idea of the Latin cross, choosing among many projects the one of Charles Maderno who is also the author of the façade. Maderno added three chapels respectively on both sides making the Basilica larger but sensibly diminishing the effect of the dome. Urban VIII consecrated the new temple on the 18th November 1623, 1300th anniversary of its first consecration. Maderno was succeeded by Bernini who took up the direction of the works in 1629 giving in many parts a baroque style to the Basilica and creating the magnificent colonnade which adorns the most beautiful square in the world. Considering the number of Popes and architects who worked at the construction of the Basilica and the three centuries and a half to end it we can form an idea of the large sums required to build this huge Basilica,

the most complete and large master-piece ever built. All the arts have contributed to decorate this grandiose building, which is undoubtedly the most wonderful monument in the world and expressed through the wonderful tongue of art the triumphant universality of the Church of Rome.

ST. PETER'S SQUARE.

The magnificent beauty of this square quite justifies the great admiration of him who sees it for the first time. This square is formed by a double semi-circle and the space between the columns is of 240 metres. The wonderful colonnade surrounding it is the master-piece of architecture of John Laurence Bernini and forms an entrance suitable for the greatest Basilica in the world. The arcades are formed by four lines of columns forming three galleries, of which the central one is the largest while the side ones are smaller, each of them consisting of 124 columns of Doric order intermingled with 44 pillars. The statues of the Saints of the Terrace on the colonnade are due to the Disciples of Bernini and measure 3,24 metres. The large armorial bearings on the façade are Pope Alexander VII's who continued the construction. The colonnade is 16 metres high and 18 metres large. Bernini finished the

great work in six years; the colonnade was begun in 1657 and finished in 1663 under Pope Clements X. On the right at the end of the porticos stands the Bronze Door leading to the Royal Staircase, the principal entrance to the Vatican Palace.

The Obelisk which stands in the centre of the square is formed by a monolith in red granite, 25 metres high. It is without hieroglyphics. Caligola had it carried from Egypt and placed in his Circus. Sixtus V who transformed so many pagan monuments into Christian ones, wanted to have it situated where it is standing at present and dedicated it to the Holy Cross as we read on the base. The Pope intrusted Architect Dominic Fontana with the work of removal and reconstruction. The latter succeeded in the difficult undertaking of creating a colossal and ingenious mechanism planned by himself and carried out with the help of 800 workmen and 140 horses.

The work was started on April 30th 1586 and was ended on September the 10th in the same year.

The iridescent water spouts of the two fountains, 14 metres high lend a note of vivacity to the solemnity of the square and decorate it with great harmony.

The fountain on the right is by Maderno, the left one similar to the former was built later.

The staircase composed of three levels was built by order of Paul V and rebuilt as it appears at present by Alexander VII on a design by Bernini. On both sides there are two great modern statues: St. Peter by De Fabris, and St. Paul by Adam Tadolini. Both were situated here in the place of the ancient ones decorating the old Basilica which are now in the Petriano Museum. The façade, a work by Maderno, was chosen among many projects but did not meet general approval. However though not beautiful, it has a majestic impressiveness harmonizing with the whole. It is 114,69 metres long and 45,44 metres high; started in 1607 it was completed in 1614 not in 1612 as we read on the base. It is decorated with 8 columns, 4 pillars, 6 half pillars sustaining the principal entablature which is surmounted by a low attic decorated with some large statues of the Saviour, the Baptist and the Apostles, and two clocks by Valadier. On the façade open nine balconies of which the central one serves for the solemn papal benedictions. The dome, a miracle of modern architecture is superior in beauty to any creation of the ancients; it was a work by Bramante inspired from the Dome of the Pantheon.

Afterwards Michael Angelo made a new model which excels in beauty the project of Bramante

and started its construction which at his death had reached only the lower part of the Dome.

After 24 years Sixtus V who during his short pontificate gave an extraordinary building arrangement to Rome, would continue the construction regardless of the difficulties and of the huge expense. He entrusted James della Porta with the work. The latter with a wonderful artistic sense, who without straying much from the splendid design of Michael Angelo, made some alterations to the dome, conferring on it more lightness. 800 workmen worked without interruption from morning to night; the colossal work started on the 16th of July 1588 was ended on 24th of May 1590. The walls of the dome are double, between the two walls there run the steps leading to the inner terrace and the two outside terraces from which we admire a landscape of incomparable beauty. On the top an inner small staircase leads as far as the inside of the sphere of the dome which can accomodate 16 persons. The dome of St. Peter's which so nobly rises on the sepulchre of the fisherman of Galilea is the most beautiful, harmonious and noble work of all time and represents for the catholic world the magnificent symbol of the universal Church and its centre: the Papacy.

THE PORTICO.

The façade has five doors leading tho the grandiose Portico, 71 metres long and 43 metres wide. At the end, on the right, there is the statue of the Emperor Constantine by Bernini, on the left Charles Magno's by Comacchini. Behind the principal entrance, on the top, there is the celebrated mosaic *The little ship of St. Peter* by Giotto. It was transferred from the ancient Basilica and represents Jesus walking on the water; the ship with the Apostles is the symbol of the Church, it has been retouched many times.

Of the five doors leading to the Church, the central bronze one, is adorned with bas-reliefs by Filarete (1445) representing the martyrs of St. Peter and St. Paul, the coronation of the Emperor, the audience of the Pope to the Western nations.

The last door on the right is the Holy Door which is opened only in the holy years by the Pope himself with a solemn ceremony.

THE INSIDE.

The first impression is grandiose but not as it should be, as the Latin cross formation of the Church and the accurate proportion of all the

parts diminishes the impression which is by far stronger looking from the transepts. The total length is 185,37 metres, while St. Paul's in London is 157,20 metres.

Florence Cathedral's length is 149,28 metres and Milan Cathedral's length is 134,17 metres.

These measures marked on the central floor show that this temple is the largest in the world. Immediately after the central part, on the floor there is the huge disc of porphyry carried here from the ancient church, on which Charles Magne on his knees received the crown of Emperor of the West from Pope Leo III (in the year 800).

The central nave has four grandiose arcades, each supported by graved Corinthian pillars 24,80 metres high supporting a large entablature, on a design by Michael Angelo and the vault decorated with coffers in golden plaster. On the top in the nooks, there are the statues of the founders of religious orders, whose names are written on the bases; all works of good sculptors (Valle, Rusconi, Bracci etc.). On both sides are the two Holy water basins in yellow marble in the shape of a shell; to remark the two angels, supporting them, 2 metres high.

On the right at the end of the central nave there is the celebrated statue of St. Peter whose

foot all the religious people of the whole world come and kiss. According to the tradition this statue was got from the fusion of Jupiter Capitoline, while on the contrary the work is thought to be by Arnolf di Cambio (XIII century). In great solemnities the statue is covered with precious ornaments. Over it there is the portrait in mosaic of Pius IX, who was the first after St. Peter, to reach the 25th year of reign. Then there is the dome supported by four huge pillars whose inside is 119 metres high. The diameter is 42 metres, each pillar has a perimeter of 11 metres. Over the decoration of the pillars there is the inscription: «Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et tibi dabo claves regni coelorum». Higher there is the lower part of the dome with 16 windows; lastly the vault also divided into 16 compartments adorned with mosaics and golden plasters. In the corners of the dome there are the four Evangelists. In the nooks of the pillars there are four grandiose statues: St. Longinus who opened Jesus's chest with his lance (Bernini's); St. Helene, the Emperor Constantine's mother with the relics of the Cross (Bolgi's); St. Veronica showing the shroud with the image of the Saviour (Mochi's); St. Andrew by Dusquenoy. The lodges over the statues are adorned with spiral marble columns, taken from the ancient Basilica.

Of them during the Holy week the Saint relics of Christ's Passion are exposed.

In the middle there is the canopy protecting the High Altar situated on the sepulchre of the Apostle where only the Pope can say mass.

The canopy is a remarkable work by Bernini, a very original creation which ingeniously resolves the problem of not covering the back of the Church and of giving to the protection of the altar a mien of lightness as well as of majesty. The bronze columns in spiral, are adorned with vine-leaves; the metal was got from the one adorning the beams of the portico of the Pantheon. Below, the Confession, the sepulchre of St. Peter designed by Maderno and adorned with rich marbles; around it there burn in perpetuity 95 lamps adorned with bronze.

The double staircase leads to the tomb, where is kneeling Pius VI, a wonderful work by Canova (1822). So the visitors comes back to the entrance beginning the visit to the naves. On the right there stands the Chapel of Piety, so-called from the group of Piety by Michael Angelo, a juvenile work, inspired to a sad sweetness, the only work having the author's signature.

On the right of the altar there stands the column in spiral wich is, according to the tradition, the one of the temple of Solomon on which

Jesus leant during the debate with the doctors. The vault of the chapel represents the triumph of the Cross, by Lanfranco.

Going on, on the left there is the sepulchre of Queen Christina of Sweeden turned a catholic in 1655. It is a work by Fontana. On the right there stands the sepulchre of Leo XII by Fabris (1836) under which there is a chapel, said of the Crucifix, which is attributed to Peter Cavallini.

In the second passage, there is the chapel of St. Sebastian with the mosaic of the altar which reproduces a painting by Domenichino of the Church of St. Maria degli Angeli.

In the passage, on the right there stands the sepulchre of Innocent XIII (by Philip Valle), on the left there are the tombs of the celebrated countess Mathilde of Toscana from a design by Bernini. The bas-relief represents the scene of Canossa with the submission of the Emperor Henry IV to pope Gregory VII (St. Speranza). The large chapel on the right, said of the Sacrament, has on the altar a large, wonderful tabernacle in golden bronze by Bernini, and the painting of the St. Trinidad by Peter da Cortona. On the right there is the reproduction in mosaic of a painting, the Extasy of St. Francis.

In the third passage, on the right there stands the monument of Gregorius XIII (Rusconi) with

the bas-relief reminding the reform of the calendar made by the Pope in 1582. On the left the tomb of Gregory XIV, from which there lacks the statue. At the end of the nave, there is the mosaic of the famous painting of Domenichino, the Communion of St. Jerome, which is to be found now in the Vatican gallery.

The next chapel, the Blessed Virgin Mary's, also called Gregorian, was designed by James della Porta, it is rich in precious marbles, with the ancient image of the Virgin of the Succour. There is also the tomb of pope Gregory XIV by L. Amici with the statues of Wisdom and Prudence and a bas-relief representing the propagation of Faith.

In the passage on the right there is the tomb of Benedit XIV (P. Bracci) with the statues of Wisdom and Disinterestedness (G. Sibilia).

The mosaic of the Altar, on the left, reproduces the painting of Subleyras, St. Basil's Mass which is found at present at St. Maria of Angeli. In the right transept there are three mosaics reproducing St. Wenceslas (Caroselli), Process and Martinian (Valentino), St. Erasmus (Poussier). In the nooks there follow the statues of the founders of religious orders. In the following passage, on the right there stands the celebrated monument of Clemens XIII by Canova.

The statue of the Pope kneeling down, is sided

by the Genius of Death and by Religion; on the fore part the two figures in bas-relief: Charity and Hope, famous for the wonderful make of the two lions. On the right there is the mosaic from a painting by Lanfranco, St. Peter walking on the waves.

The last chapel on the right, St. Michael's, with the reproduction in mosaic of a painting of Guy Reni, of the Church of the Capuchins and St. Petronilla's by Guercino, of the Capitoline gallery.

Going towards the central apse the visitor sees the tomb of Clemens X by Hercules Ferrata with the bas-relief reproducing the opening of the Holy Door in the year 1675. In front of it, the miracle of St. Peter from the painting of P. Costanzi.

The apse is one of most characteristic creations of the Baroque style of Bernini. Four Saint Doctors of the Church supporting the Chair of St. Peter, in golden bronze, enclosing the very ancient one attributed according to the tradition, to St. Peter; it is in wood and ivory and is surrounded by four angels also in bronze. Above it a glory in golden plaster in the midst of which the window with yellow panes with the symbol of the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove. On both the sides of the Chair there stand the two

celebrated sepulchral monuments of Paul III Farnese and of Urban VIII.

The monument of Paul III Farnese, a work by William della Porta, after the manner of Michael Angelo; the statue of the pope is in bronze. It is sided by the magnificent statues of Justice and Prudence, the former is said to represent the pope's sister, Julia Farnese, the latter the pope's mother (Giovannella Caetani).

The statue of Urban VIII also in bronze, is a work by Bernini, the two statues represent Charity and Justice.

In the passage after the tribune there is the tomb of Alexander VIII Ottoboni (1691) in bronze, by A. de Rossi; on the left the mosaic of St. Peter effecting the recovery of the paralytic patient from a painting of Francis Mancini.

There follows the Chapel of the Column, so-called from an ancient image of the Our Lady, painted on a column and brought from the ancient church.

On the opposite altar a bas-relief of great value by Algardi, representing pope Leon Magnus persuading Attila not to attack Rome, under the altar there are the relics of the pope and the tombs of his successors Leon II, III and IV.

Proceeding to the transept there is the tomb of Alexander Chigi, the last work of Bernini: the statues represent Justice, Prudence, Charity and

Verity. To remark the original funeral quilt in jasper marble lifted by Death.

On the left the modern mosaic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In the left transept there are three paintings in mosaic. The first, on the left represents the martyrs St. Martial and St. Valeria, the one in the midst, the Crucifixion of St. Peter, from a painting by Guy Reni; on the right there is the Incredulity of St. Thomas.

In this transept there are many confessionaries in several languages, from which the penitentiary touches with a long stick the faithful, kneeling down in sign of humility.

In the passage there is the monument to Pius VIII by P. Tenerani (1866) with the statues of the Apostles Peter and Paul interceding for the safety of the Pope.

Under the monument there is the entrance to the sacristy. On the altar on the right there is the mosaic representing the chastisement of Saphira who would lie to the Apostles, from a painting by Pomarancio at St. Maria of Angeli's.

The Clementine Chapel with the altar and the tomb of St. Gregory Magnus, the mosaic was taken from a painting by Andrew Sacchi. Opposite to it, is the monument to Pius VII by Thorwaldsen,

built by order of Cardinal Consalvi with the statues of Wisdom and Fortitude.

Proceeding towards the central aisle behind the large pillar there is the copy in mosaic of the Transfiguration by Raphael, the famous painting of the Vatican gallery. In the passage to the right aisle, there is the monument to pope Innocent XI by Stephan Monnet: the bas-relief represents the delivrance of Vienna from the besiege of the Turks effected by John Sobieski.

On the right, the tomb of Leo XI who reigned only 24 days, by Algardi, the bas-relief reminds the abjuration of the king of France. There follows the large chapel of the choir with the seats for the canons celebrating their ordinary functions; it is adorned with mosaics and precious plasters. On the altar there is the Immaculate Conception from a painting by P. Bianchi.

In the passage on the right there is the monument to Pis X (by P. E. Astorri), with bas-reliefs representing the most important events of his pontificate.

The tomb of Innocent VIII (Cibo) by Anthony Pollaiolo. The pope is represented when alive and after his death. This monument was taken from the ancient Basilica.

The following chapel is said to be of the Presentation, from the painting in mosaic on the

altar, after the original one by F. Romanelli, at St. Maria of Angeli's. On the left, the monument of Benedict XV by P. Canonica. In the background there are some paintings representing the horrors of the great war (1914-1918); proceeding under the arcade, on the right top, there is the tomb of Clementine Sobieski Stuart by P. Bracci, the portrait is in mosaic and is by P. Cristofer. The door below leads to the staircase leading to the dome.

Opposite to it, the tomb of the last Stuarts, a wonderful work by Canova with very beautiful weeping angels.

The last chapel is the one of the Baptism. The conch is thought to have come from the tomb of the Emperor Otto II, the ornaments in bronze are by C. Fontana. The three mosaics derive respectively from the paintings of Charles Marratta (*The baptism of Jesus*), of G. Passeri (*St. Peter christening in prison St. Process and St. Martinian*), of A. Procaccini (*The baptism of Cornelius*).

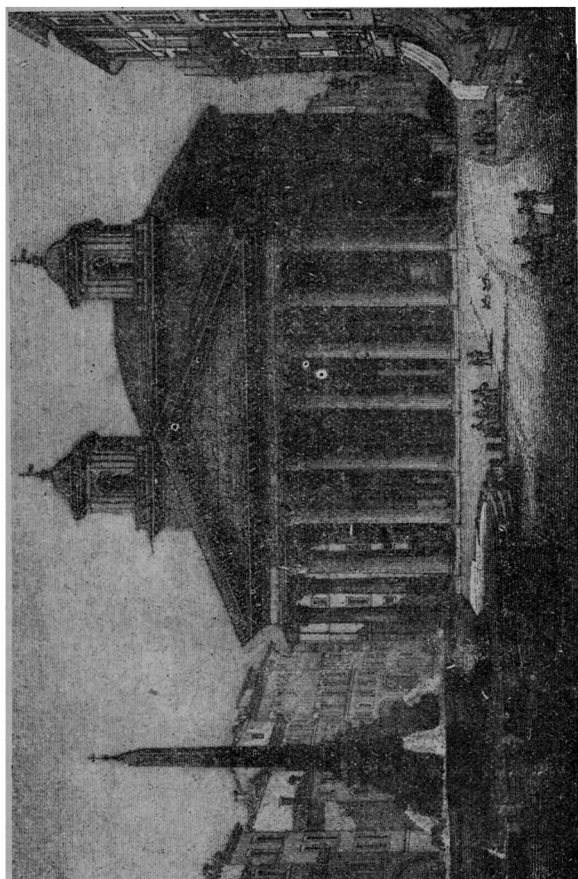
Ending the visit to the great Basilica, the ideal centre of the Christian world and the secular aim of hope and faith, the mind of the visitor gets exited with a sublime enthusiasm and a deep emotion

THE PANTHEON

This famous temple is the most complete and ancient monument in Rome. It is formed by a round dome preceded by a pronaus and a large portico with columns.

It is one century and more that the reciprocal relation between these two parts has been discussed; some very recent studies have made the inscription clear. It may be resumed as follows.

The temple was dedicated to the seven gods of the planet (whence its name) by Marcus Agrippa, one of Agrippa's nephews. Quite rebuilt by Adrian it is just as we admire it to day. Adrian made the founder's name repeated on the gable. The three parts, the portico, the antiportico and the rotunda were built in different times, but one after the other. Septimius Severo and Caracalla as it results from an inscription, provided to the rebuilding of the decorative part and to a new



paving. In 609 it was transformed into a Christian church (*S. Maria ad Martires*) by pope Bonifacius IV. The Emperor Constant II (663) took from the roof the tiles of golden bronze which were afterwards substituted by Gregory III (735) with others in lead. In Middle Ages it was suffocated by shabby constructions, then taken off by Eugenius IV in 1435. The last transformation was due to Bernini, who built the two little peels, taken off afterwards in 1893.

The level of the square was anciently much lower. A staircase whose remains still exist led to the temple. The grandiose portico is in 16 columns on three naves; 14 columns are in grey and pink granite, the three ones on the left were replaced by Urban VIII and Alexander VII, whose armorial-bearings are on the head-bands.

The roof, with wooden beams, was rebuilt by Urban VIII who took off the ancient bronze linings. On the fore part of the pronasus there are two large niches which are said to have contained the colossal statues of Agrippa and Augustus.

The door lined in bronze is still the ancient one. The inside has a majestic dome leaning on an attic; the height of the dome, equal to its diameter, is 43,40 metres. It is a perfect emisphère. Of the 7 niches, four are rectangular and three half circular. They are faced two Corinthian co-

lums. Between the niches there are 8 stations, afterwards transformed into altars with columns in porphyry and granite; above there is an entablature and an high attic. The panelled vault ends in a large central hole having a diameter of 8,92 metres. It gives light to the whole building and puts into mystic communication the divinities with the sky; it is framed with bronze. In the first niche on the right there is a beautiful Annunciation, a fresco attributed to Melozzo da Forlì. In the next one there is the grave of Victor Emanuel II (1878) by Architect Manfredi. On the high altar there is the image of the Virgin who gave the Christian name to the temple. In the posterior part of the Pantheon there are some remains of the Baths of Agrippa; a large apse and an entablature richly carved with marine ornaments (shells, dolphins).

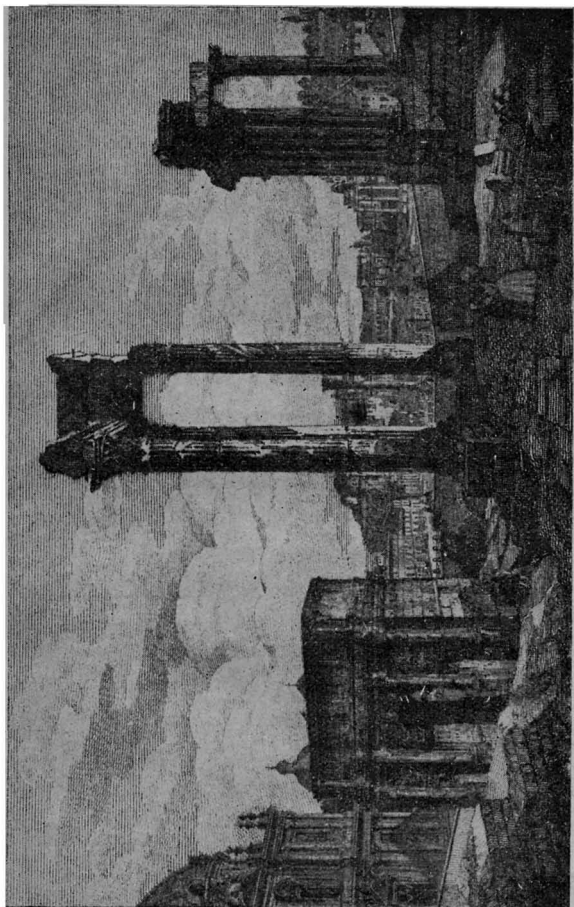
Soon after the high altar in the rectangular niche there is the marble memorial of Cardinal Consalvi. Between the fifth and sixth niche there is the grave of Raphael Sanzio, on the fore part of the sarcophagus we read the famous inscription of Bembo: "*Ille hic est Raphael, timuit qui sospite vinci rerum magna parens et moriente mori*" (Here is that Raphael by whom while he lived the great mother of things feared to be won, and when he died she too feared to die). On the altar

there is the Madonna by Lonrenzetto (Madonna del Sasso). A tomb-stone above it is the funeral memorial of painter Hannibal Carracci and on the right of the altar the memorial of Mary Dovizi da Bibbiena, the fiancé of Raphael. There follows the grave of Humbert I, king of Italy (1900), by G. Sacconi, and of queen Margaret. On the left of the following altar and in the seven niche there are tomb-stones and graves of very great artists: Balthasar Peruzzi, Thaddeus Zuccari, Flaminus Vacca.

THE ROMAN FORUM

In the valley situated among the three hills, the Palatine, the Capitoline and the Esquiline, there are monuments of the greatest importance for the history of Rome. There took place the most remarkable and famous events handed down to us by the legend and the historical sources. For a visit it is necessary to remember that these are remains of several epochs: ten centuries of history have left here their marks.

The visit to the Forum can be started before going down, from the entrance situated near *Via dell'Impero*, from the street under the Capitol. On the right there is the *Carcere Tulliano* (Tulliano jail) an ancient well afterwards trasformed into a horrible prison. There died the enemies of Rome (Vercingetorix and Jugurta) and where according to the Christian tradition, were imprisoned St. Peter and St. Paul. Under a first room



going through an opening of the floor there is the jail with a water source which the legend attributes to a miracle of St. Peter.

There follows an area, immediately under the big wall of the *Tabularium*, with the base of the temple of the Concord built by Camillus in 367 B. C. to commemorate the end of the strife between the patricians and the plebeians, the Temple of Vespasian with three columns in marble, built in 79 A. C. and dedicated to Emperor by his two sons Titus and Domitian.

Going on there is a colonnade behind which there were twelve rooms, with statues dedicated to the principal gods of the Roman religion, the *Porticus Deorum Consentium*.

The ancient road going up to the hills of the Capitoline is the *Clivus Capitolinus* which went as far as the Temple of Jupiter situated on the top. Coming now from the principal entrance there are on the right the remains of the Basilica Aemilia, a large building with a colonnade, many times restored and then destroyed in 410 by a fire at the time of the Gothic invasion. On the floor we can see the traces of coins melted with fire. Before the Basilica we can see the *Sacellum Cloacinae*, a small circular enclosure which has the shape of a temple dedicated to Venus; at the entrance of the *Cloaca Maxima* it can be seen

through the Basilica. Then the visitor goes on towards an area interesting for some very ancient monuments standing in the ancient *Comitium*, the little square where in the early times there took place the first meetings of the public life of Rome.

It is also interesting to visit the *lapis niger*. Under this floor of black stones there was according to the legend the tomb of Romulus.

Probably it is only a simple commemorative *ex-voto*. Below there are some remains of the most ancient Latin inscription, which may be meant to portray of a sacred ceremony performed by a King (?).

On the right of the *Comitium* there stands the *Curia*, the Roman Senate changed in the Middle Ages to a church and nowadays quite restored to its former shape. It was rebuilt after many a fire and restored by Augustus and at last by Diocletian, it is a rectangular hall which they entered through a staircase. The floor is in precious marbles, on which there lay the wooden seats of the senators. The walls are adorned with nooks with columns of alabaster.

In the central wall there was the statue of Victory, removed by the emperor Gratian in 382.

At the NW west corner of the Forum we admire the grandiose Arch of Septimius Severus,

erected in remembrance of the victories over the Arabians and on the Partians, illustrated with the four large paintings on the lesser arches.

Opposite to the Arch in the Forum square there are the storied-shelves of Trajan which are very interesting bas-reliefs reminding the benefits of the Emperor to the Roman people and specially to poor children and orphans, and the condonation of taxes. To observe in the inside faces the three animals of the solemn sacrifice (the pig, the sheep, the bull). On the left there are the *Rostra*, a platform from which the political orators spoke; they were adorned with columns and statues.

Behind the *Rostra* there is a circular construction in bricks, the *Umbilicus Urbis Romae*, the ideal centre of the city and the *Miliarum Aureum*, a column on which there were written in golden letters the distances between Rome and the principal towns of the Empire. Near it, under a shed, there are the remains of the very ancient *Vulcanal*, an altar erected to Vulcan by Titus Tazio.

Going on towards the West, there are the eight large columns of the Temple of Saturn within which the public Treasury was held in custody.

In the IV century A. C. it was restored after a fire, according to the inscription of the architrave.

At the foot of the Temple of Saturnus we can see the pavement of the Sacred Way, which

coming from the Arch of Titus (*Summa sacra via*) passed through the Temple of Caesar (middle) and at last went through the square of the Forum (*ima sacra via*).

Beyond the temple the road took the name of Capitoline Low-hill and went as far as the temple of Jupiter on the top of the hill.

Going back to the Forum square the visitor sees the remains of two basis of equestrian statues (Domitian and Constantine and a paved area remembering the *Lacus Curtius*, an ancient gulf where it is said, there hurled down on horseback the noble Sabinus Mezzio Curzio to save his country in danger, with his sacrifice.

The area of the Forum is limited towards west by seven basis of columns; more towards the center there is the *Column of Foca*, dedicated to this Byzantine Emperor by pope Boniface IV to thank him for the gift of the Pantheon. Going on the Sacred Way, on the right, there are the remains of the grandiose *Basilica Julia* built by Julius Caesar in 46 B. C. and destined to the discussion of civil processes, many times destroyed and restored. To remark on the steps of the stairs the popular games graffiti. After the Basilica the visitor goes through *Vicus Tuscus*, separating it from the grandiose *Castor Temple*, famous for the three large Corinthian columns, erected in

484 B. C. to commemorate the protectors of the city, Castor and Pollux, who helped the Romans in the victory against the Tarquins at Lago Regillo.

The legend relates that the two young men coming back from the battle watered their horses in the fountain of Juturna in the Forum, informing the citizens of the enemy defeat. The temple was rebuilt several times and its last reconstruction seems due to the Emperor Tiberius (6 A. C.). The *Fountain of Juturna* is at the base of the temple; it is a square basin in marble on whose border there is an altar with bas-reliefs representing the two *Dioscuri*, their sister Helene, Jupiter and Leda.

The water of the sanctuary was considered healthy for the sick.

Behind the *Temple of Castor and Pollux* there are the remains of the *Temple of Augustus* built by Tiberius and rebuilt by Domitian; it may be considered as a large entrance-hall to the Palatine. Soon after behind the source of Juturna there is the very ancient medioeval church of *Santa Maria Antiqua* built on the ruins of an ancient pagan building, considered by some people the Library annexed to the Temple of Augustus, by others a meeting place and the archives of Legionaries on leave. The Church is very inte-

resting from the point of view of the history of arts, for its paintings belonging to various epochs, from VII to IX century A. C.

They represent portraits of Saints and stories of the Old Testament (left aisle); in the little chapel at the end there is the story of the martyr of St. Quirico and St. Judith and a remarkable scene of the Crucifixion. In the apse there is a large figure of Christ with some heads of Saints. Coming back from the *Source of Juturna* and proceeding again towards the Forum the visitor leaves on its right the *Oratory of the Martyrs*, with medioeval paintings on the walls and in the apse, then the visitor goes through the base of the large *Arch of Augustus*, which was situated between the *Castor Temple* and the *Temple of Caesar* (I Divi Juli) built in 42 A. C. in the same place where the body of Julius Caesar was burnt.

The temple not very large had a façade with six columns facing the square of the Forum opposite to the *Rostra*. On the fore part the visitor still sees the base of the large equestrian statue of Caesar; an other statue was in the inside of the Temple.

Going on through the Sacred Way on the right there are the *Temple of Antoninus and Faustine* with a portico with six columns in cipolin marble. This temple was quite covered with marble plastres.

At present the area of the Temple is occupied by the *Temple of St. Lawrence in Miranda*.

On the right and opposite to the Temple there are the remains of the *Regia Pontificis*, where were kept the sacerdotal archives and on whose inside walls the list of all the most remarkable events (*Fasti*), the official calendar and the names of the magistrates, etc., were affixed.

Behind the *Regia Pontificis*, towards the Palatine, there is the large area dedicated to *Vesta* and to the *Vestal Virgins*.

In the little *Temple of Vesta* partially rebuilt with some fragment, the sacred fire was guarded: it was the symbol of the life of Rome and was never to be extinguished.

According to the tradition it was built by Numa Pompilio; many times destroyed by a fire, it was rebuilt at last by Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severo. By the temple there is the House of the Vestal Virgins. It was formed by a large central atrium, surrounded with a portico n columns, with fountain-basins. The Vestal Virgins were six, presided over by a *Vestalis Maxima*; the statues of some *Vestales Maximae* are still seen in the atrium. We observe near the entrance that the name of one of them has been erased probably because she turned a Christian and was struck from the lists. Then there are

the Virgins' rooms and a large drawing-room in the end.

Going on along the Sacred Way, by the *Temple of Antoninus and Faustina* there is a very ancient *burial-vault* of the II century B. C. with crematory and inhumation vaults.

There follows the *Temple of Romulus*, the son of Maxentius, an original construction whose bronze part has remained sound and whose lock still works.

Behind the temple we see the remains of the *Temple of the Penates* on whose walls there was affixed the map in travertine; some important remains of it are to be found in the *Conservative Palace* on the Capitol. Proceeding along there is the huge *Basilica of Maxentius*, founded by this emperor in the year 308 A. C. and then finished by Constantine. There is still a side with three large rooms (observe the am-
pleness of the vaults) and a part of the high apse, where there was placed a colossal statue of Constantine of which there are many remains, at present situated in the court-yard of the Capitoline palace. Before the huge pillars, which seem to have inspired Michael Angelo for those of St. Peter there were eight columns. The last one was taken away by Paul V and situated in the square of St. Maria Maggiore. On the right of the

Sacred Way, recent researches have established that there is « a grandiose portico built by Nero with a very large entrance to his Domus Aurea ».

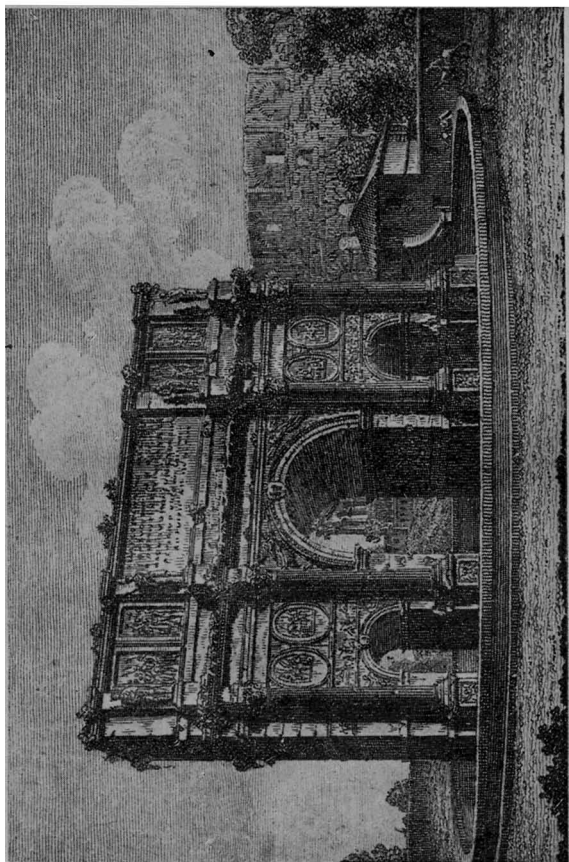
On the top of the Sacred Way there stands the *Arch of Titus* to commemorate the victory over the Jews and the taking of Jerusalem. The Arch was restored by Architect Valadier and liberated from the Mediaeval constructions. The two bas-reliefs of the inside are very remarkable, one of them represents the *quadriga* of triumph and the emperor crowned in the sky, the other one represents the removal of the Sacred objects taken from the temple of Jerusalem, among which the famous candelabrum with seven brackets. On the ceiling the emperor carried into the sky by an eagle.

THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE

This magnificent *Arch of triumph* was built in 315 A. C. by the Senate and the Roman people in honour of Constantine for his victory on Maxentius at Ponte Milvio in 312. It is in three vaults with eight beautiful carved Corinthian old yellow columns, coming, as the entablature, from a construction of the time of Domitian.

It is the less damaged of the Arches in Rome. Though built for the most part with fragments taken from former monuments of different epochs, and the bas-reliefs adorning it be of different artistic value, the whole is imposing and majestic, thanks to the harmony of the proportions.

On the fore part we read this inscriptions "To Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantine Flavius Maximus Pius, happy august, the Senate and the Roman people dedicated this memorable *Arch of triumph* as with the help of Gods and for the



greatness of his mind, with his army and making a just war he delivered the republic from the tyrant as well as from every party ”.

The bas-reliefs of the lower part, that is the victories on the pedestals of the columns, the figures of the rivers on the sides of the side vaults, the bas-reliefs under the medallions representing scenes of the Emperor's life, the Sun and the Moon which are on the sides, are all of Constantine's time, when art was in great decadence and so of a rough made.

The eight medallions situated on the lower vaults representing scenes of chase, of sacrifices and gods, are deemed belonging to the age of Adrian, for their style as well as because among the heads there is one representing Antinous and the famous ephebe favoured by Adrian.

The very beautiful bas-reliefs of the attic, of a wonderful made which represent warlike episodes, were taken from a construction of Marcus Aurelius. From an arch of Trajan were taken the eight statues of barbarians situated on the top and a large decoration representing the battle against the Dacians; it was divided into four parts and placed in the inside of the middle vault and on the sides of the arch. In the west side towards the Palatine under the decoration of Constantine's epoch there is the inscription commemorative of

the restoration made by Clemens XII. The arch that in Middle Ages was incorporated in the fortifications of the Frangipani, was restored in XVIII century and then later, set out again in light. Now we can admire it in all his primitive magnificence.

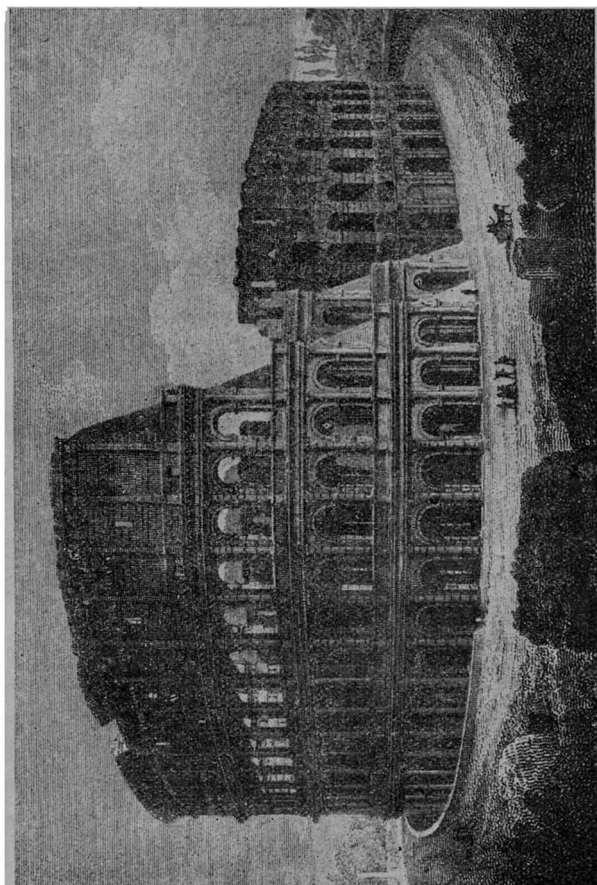
THE COLOSSEUM OR FLAVIAN AMPHITHEATRE

In 72 A. C. to win the popular favour, Vespasian began the construction of this majestic and imposing building where there was one of the artificial lakes of the *Domus Aurea* of Nero. It was inaugurated by his son Titus, in 80, with solemn feasts which lasted one hundred days and during which 5000 wild beasts were killed and many thousand gladiators lost their life. There was also a naval battle, which was afterwards repeated by Domitian, and this is a certain indicium that it was possible to inundate the amphitheatre. Being started and finished by the Flavi, it took the name of Flavian amphitheatre; after many centuries it got the name of Colosseum under which it is more commonly known. Though seriously damaged during many centuries by violent earthquakes and many times pillered after its decadence to furnish materials to the most impor-

tant and known Roman palaces, the amphitheatre appears also at present in all its imposing majesty. We can admire better the beauty of the construction observing it from the NE side, which almost untouched rises in all its height towards the blue and shining sky of Rome. It is known the prophecy of the Venerable Bede of the VII century: "*While stands the Colosseum, Rome shall stand; When falls the Colosseum, Rome shall fall; And when Rome falls, the world*".

The building which has an elliptical shape, has a circumference of 527 metres, the large axis measures 188 metres, the little one measures 156 metres. It is 57 metres high. It is said that 35.000 slaves worked to its construction.

The outward part of the building was made of large blocks of travertine, the interior part of briks and tuff. The blocks of travertine were formerly armed with iron hoocks that were taken off in Middle Ages. The outward part is composed of 4 stories, the first three are formed of arcades supported by half pillars in three orders; the first one is Tuscan, the second one Ionic, the third one Corinthian. The fourth order, without arcades, formed by a wall, has a window over every two arches and is decorated with slender Corinthian pillars.



Under the arcades of the second and third floor there were probably some statues. In the outward entablature we see some squared openings each at a distance of 1,25 metres, to which there correspond immediately below some travertine pier-tables. The opening and the pier-tables served to hold the bronze beams holding the huge awning which protected the spectators from rain and from the burning strays of the sun.

This awning was worked by a detachment of the imperial marine of the Roman squadron of Miseno.

The LXXX entrance arcades had each a number except the principal ones on the North and South reserved to the Emperor and his court. The Northern entrance, between the XXXVIII and XXXIX arcades, leads to a hall in which we can still see some remains of painted and gilt plasters.

Through the numbered arcades people went down to the undergrounds courts leading to the stairs. The spectators passing under the arcade whose number was corresponding to the ones of their *tesserae* went up through the stairs and get into the *cavea* from 160 vomitories (so-called because the crowd seemed to be vomited) and went to take their places on the flight of steps destined to them. The amphitheatre could contain 60.000 spectators, without counting the nu-

merous slaves and the seamen charged with the services. The square called *arena* from the sand with which they covered the ground to facilitate the plays of the athletes, measured 76×46 metres. The excavations have set out in light the cells in which were kept the wild beasts destined to the plays of the amphitheatre; the corridors which served to organize the spectacles, and the pillars on which were placed the machines required to. The wall enclosing the whole square was said *Podium*; it was perforated here and there with iron gates through which entered the arena the gladiators and the wild beasts. On the *Podium*, so high that the wild beasts couldn't jump over it, there were the seats destined to the Emperor and to his family, the ones destined to the senators, to the chief magistrates, and to the Vestal Virgins. Soon after the *Podium* there began the flight of steps for the spectators. These flights of steps were divided into three orders, the first two were in marble, the third one in wood was rebuilt after a fire with more solid material. The steps ended into a gallery of 80 columns supporting a wooden ceiling on which there stood the seamen charged with the working of the *Velarium*. The spectators orderly and comfortably accommodated in their places, generally attended the gladiator-plays (*ludi gladiatores*) of

which the Romans were very fond. "Panem et Circenses" they asked in a loud voice and the emperors granted them willingly as they knew well that the remissness of such spectacles had as a consequence the loss of the popular favour. Generally the gladiators were war-prisoners who were committed to a trainer who instructed and trained them in the art of fighting with value and ability. with signified movements to stir up the admiration of the public. To keep their limbs supple and their muscles in strength they were kept on a special barley-flour diet. They appeared solemnly into the arena, also in numerous couples, and after saluting the Emperor, holding their arms, began fighting. Those who yielded to the fighting, if their wounds gave them some hope of living, could, raising their finger, ask for the piety and mercy of the spectators who hold their fists shut and their thumbs bent, while if they wanted that the vanquished gladiator died they hold their hands stretched out and their thumbs down. The gladiators destined to the fightings with wild animals, were called *bestiari*. They had on a short tunic and had no defensive weapon, they should make use only of their strength in the fight. But generally only those who had been condemned to death were destined to this exercise. These plays considered very cruel by some contemporaries and contrary to

any feeling of humanity, lasted a long time. Not even Christianity had the power of making them cease soon. The gladiator-fightings were suppressed by Honorius in 405; the wild-beasts ones lasted till towards the first half of the VI century.

There are no elements to support the legend of the martyrdoms of the Christians, which took place in the Colosseum; it is impossible either to deny or confirm it.

Some archaeologists basing themselves on the fact that on this spot neither churches nor chapels were built as in other spots where the Christians suffered martyrdom for their faith. Only in 700 St. Leonard from Porto St. Maurice put here the niches for the 14 stations of the *Via Crucis*. The imposing bulk of the Colosseum which for its wonderful structure, has so validly resisted to the inclemency of centuries, keeping intact its majestic beauty, produces in the mind of the visitor a deep and lasting impression and gives an exact idea of the gorgeous magnificence of the Roman imperial epoch.

THE BATHS OF CARACALLA OR ANTONINE

These public baths were built in Rome during the period of the Empire with extraordinary magnificence and prodigality.

They offered all that could be useful to the pleasures of life, from the body education to the mind elevation.

Beyond the private baths and the large *piscinae* in common with warm, cold and tepid water (*calidarium*, *tepidarium*, *frigidarium*) there were the *porticos*, the *exedras*, the *gymnasiums* for gymnastic trainings and the shady avenues. These baths were furnished with rich libraries and club-rooms, where they talked, read and debated. The *Baths of Caracalla*, of which we admire the wonderful remains, were considered very splendid for the grandiosity of the construction, for the audacity and novelty of the architectonic forms and for the magnificent richness of their decorations.

Metals and coloured marbles covered them, oozing water sprouts animated them, innumerable statues embellished them. Ancient writers who had the luck to admire them in all their splendour, describe their magnificence with enthusiasm. Olimpiodoro tells us that they could contain 1600 bathers a time. Started by Septimius Severo in the year 206 A. C. they were inaugurated in the year 216, two years before his death by his son Antonine Caracalla, a cruel and dissolute emperor, and took their name from the latter. They were completed by his successors Eliogabalo and Alexander Severe and were abandoned in the XII century under Iustinian when for the invasion of the Goths the aqueducts were damaged. Many statues have been taken from the Baths of Caracalla, among which the *Torso of Belvedere*, which was the object of an attentive study and a great admiration from Michael Angelo (it is at present in the Vatican Museums); the most celebrated marbles of the Farnese collection; the group of the Toro Farnese, the Flora, Hercules by Glicone, all sculptures of wonderful made which at present are in the National Museum of Naples.

The huge square of the enclosure whose side is 330 metres long has also a complete round of 1320 metres and is formed by porticos that in the inside have a long flight of little rooms whose

usage is unknown (perhaps they were shops or rooms for the watching soldiers). These porticos end in two large apses towards the SW and the SE corner. In the middle of the SW side there is a large *exedra* from which the Romans attended athletic competitions which took place in the *xystus*, a large court adorned and embellished with flowers and oozing waters—sprouts, with plants of different kinds which made it cool and shady.

The *exedra* was sided by the libraries separated from the remainder by little courts to preserve them from humidity, behind them there were large reserves of water, supplying the baths. The central building quite separated from the huge enclosure by large courts or by the above mentioned *xystus*, has a rectangular shape and measures 220 metres per 114. From the entrance at the NE which opened on Via Nova a large and magnificent street, we see the right-angle of the Frigidarium (a place destined to cold baths) with the *piscina* which was decorated with eight large columns in granite. One of these columns was carried from Florence in 1500 by Duke Cosmo de' Medici and placed before the Bridge at St. Trinità. From the Frigidarium we pass into the central hall which has two *exedras* by the lateral extremities facing the corridors of the gymnasiums. The floors of these ones are adorned with

remains of very beautiful mosaics, but the two most precious and representatives athletes and gymnasts were carried from the *Lateranense Museum* where they are at present. Opposite to the large hall, through the *Tepidarium* (the tepid bath) we pass into the large circular hall or *Calidarium* (the warm bath). By the sides of the *gymnasiums* there were many halls symmetrically ordered. Some details of the plant wisely excogitated for the destination of the premises and the heating systems rouse a great wonder.

Some very large undergrounds destined to the many uses of the Baths have appeared in consequence of the excavations made in 1911. These undergrounds may be visited. The temple of *Mitria*, of a remarkable interest, was discovered in one of them.

The spectacle of these grandiose and imposing ruins rouses such wonder as to be surpassed only by the wonder produced by the sight of the *Colosseum*.

Observe the splendid coloured effect of the contrast between the walls reddened by the sun specially at sunset and the deep blue of the sky.

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